

MASS. CRN 1-3 1/1

Volume 1, Issue 1

October 2002



What is the MCRN?

The Massachusetts Career Resource Network (MCRN) was formed as a result of a federal Perkins Act grant awarded to the Career and Technical Education unit of the Massachusetts Department of Education (DOE).

The MCRN provides support for career guidance and academic counseling programs to promote improved decision making by students. Its goal is to answer the question: *"How do we help students make effective career choices and prepare for their lives after high school?"*

One objective of the MCRN is to make information and resources on career and educational planning and development available to students,

parents, teachers, administrators and counselors.

Another objective is to strengthen connections among middle schools, high schools and community colleges. It is hoped that by sharing "best practices" and involving students in their schoolwork and course selection, they will be encouraged to make informed educational and career choices.

During its first two years, the MCRN has funded thirty \$5,000 grants. Funds have been used for a broad range of student activities, and professional development opportunities. Funds have also been used to obtain site licenses for career development systems.

Teamwork Leads to MCRN News

Welcome to the first edition of *MCRN News*, the newsletter of the Massachusetts Career Resource Network (MCRN).

MCRN News is a joint effort of the Department of Education (DOE) and the Division of Employment and Training (DET), Massachusetts Career Information System (MassCIS).

MCRN News articles will focus on innovative career development activities and upcoming career development events, occupational

profiles, and student success stories.

We are seeking articles that highlight how career awareness and development activities helped students make successful education and career choices.

Articles of 250 words or less should be sent to: Ann Hughes-Thomas, MCRN Coordinator, DOE, 350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148, Fax:(781) 338-3905, or E-mail: ahughes-thomas@does.mass.edu. *Deadline for next issue is December 1, 2002.*

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Special points of interest:

- The Real Game Training.
- MassCIS online.
- Information on nursing assistants.
- Seventeen grants awarded.

MASSACHUSETTS CAREER RESOURCE NETWORK

MCRN NEWS

The Real Game Series

Fifteen Massachusetts Professionals Trained

The New England Career Resource Network (NECRN) hosted *The Real Game* series regional "train-the-trainer" workshops in Providence, Rhode Island on August 16-19, 2002. The training session and the materials were funded by the NECRN and the MCRN.

Fifteen Massachusetts career development professionals are now qualified to train others in at least one of the five *The Real Game* series programs. To find out who in your area is trained, contact Ann Hughes-Thomas, MCRN Coordinator, at: (781) 388-3913 or ahughes-thomas@doe.mass.edu.

The Real Game series was developed by Bill Barry, the father of a then 12-year-old child. It was originally designed to answer the often-asked question, "Why are we learning this?"

Through a variety of experiential group activities or "games," students discover personal skills and talents, practice teamwork and communication skills, make decisions, and learn the importance of goal setting. They also learn to respect people in all kinds of occupations. The games are based on the five principles of the series. The "High Five" are: *change is constant, learning is ongoing, focus on the journey, follow your heart, and access your allies*.

With the help of thousands of students and counselors, the pilot program has become a set of six internationally recognized career development programs. These programs provide teachers,

counselors, and trainers with ready-made interactive materials designed for different age and grade levels. Each program focuses on a specific aspect of community building, workplace success, and individual career planning.

The programs are: *The Play Real Game*, Grades 3 and 4; *The Make It Real Game*, Grades 5 and 6; *The Real Game*, Grades 7 and 8; *The Be Real Game*, Grades 9 and 10; and *Real Times, Real Life*, for adult learners.

The Real Game series addresses the National Career Development Guidelines, fulfills the American School Counselor Association's (ASCA) National Standards for School Counseling Program in career development, and reflects the skills and competencies of the U. S. Department of Labor's SCANS (Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills) Report.

The Real Game products and other resources can be ordered directly

MassCIS — An online career search tool

The Massachusetts Career Information System (MassCIS) is a comprehensive career guidance system that links users to career and education information.

MassCIS provides information on national and state colleges and universities. It also provides data on occupations and current state and regional labor market information.

from the National Training Support Center (NTSC). To request a catalog, call toll-free: (888) 700-8940.

The NTSC is supported through America's Career Resource Network (ACRN). The mission of ACRN is to provide school administrators, teachers, and counselors with the resources and training they need to assist youth and adults in making informed decisions about career choice and preparation.

Through the NTSC, ACRN distributes powerful, hands-on career development programs and provides training and consulting services to help implement and sustain these programs.

For detailed information about what each program of *The Real Game* series includes, visit *The Real Game* series website at: <http://www.realgame.com>.

A regional training is being held in two of the programs on November 20, 2002 at the Best Western Hotel in Marlboro, Massachusetts. Please see page 4 for more details.

At present, a free limited version of the MassCIS can be accessed on the Internet at: MassCIS <http://masscareers.intocareers.org>.

Beginning late this fall, a full version of MassCIS will be maintained on an open Internet site. Information on accessing this site will be provided when it is available.

Occupational Overview: *Nursing Assistant*

What are the duties?

Nursing assistants give personal care to patients in hospitals and nursing homes. They work under the direction of nurses and doctors.

When they come to work, nursing assistants check with the supervising nurse for instructions about each patient. They often read chart notes at the beginning of their shift to get

updates on patients. They greet patients and see how they are doing. They answer call bells and help patients with bedpans or other needs. They deliver messages, flowers, and gifts. When family members are visiting, nursing assistants may talk to them while cleaning or working in the room.

Nursing assistants prepare food trays and deliver meals. They keep records of the amount of food eaten and liquid output. They often give medicines to patients as directed by the supervising nurse or doctor. They help patients with eating, dressing, bathing, and walking. Nursing assistants clean rooms and change beds. When patients must stay in bed, nursing assistants give them bed baths and change the bed linens afterward. They help patients clean their teeth and wash and brush

their hair. They help patients turn over in bed. They give lotion or alcohol rubs to help keep skin healthy and provide comfort.

Nursing assistants set up and monitor equipment. They record vital signs such as blood pressure, temperature, pulse, and respiration. They move patients in wheelchairs or beds to examining or operating rooms. Nursing assistants sterilize equipment and supplies. They prepare and stock dressings and treatment

trays.

Nursing assistants watch patients for change in mental alertness or emotions. When they see changes, they notify the supervising nurse. Most nursing assistants try to encourage patients who feel sad or lonely.

Nursing assistants relieve fear and discomfort by bringing good cheer and kindness to patients. When leaving work, nursing assistants may give patient information to the supervisor or the nursing assistant who is coming on duty.

What preparation is needed?

Nursing assistants often learn their

skills on the job. They may receive training in high school, at a private career school, at a nursing home, or in a community college. Working part time or as a volunteer during high school is a good way to learn more about the job.

Training programs cover personal care, safe lifting, hygiene, and nutrition. Personal care includes helping patients turn over, brush their teeth and hair, dress, and walk. Depending on the employer and state requirements, training can last from a few days to several months.

How much does it pay?

Wages vary by employer and by the assistant's level of experience and responsibility.

In Massachusetts, the median wage for nursing assistants is \$1,850 per month (\$10.60 per hour). Half of all nursing assistants earn between \$1,630 and \$2,140 per month (\$9.40 and \$12.30 per hour).

Will there be jobs in the future?

In Massachusetts, the number of jobs for nursing assistants is expected to grow about as fast as the average through the year 2008.

Is certification required?

Only those nursing assistants caring for long-term care facility residents need to be certified.

Nursing assistants can advance in the field with additional education and training. Some may become licensed practical nurses (LPN) or assistants in occupational and physical therapy.

Learn more about nursing assistants by visiting the Nurse Aide Registry Program at: <http://www.state.ma.us/dph/dhcq/nar.htm>

To become certified as a long-term care nursing assistant, contact the Nurse Aide Registry Program at:

10 West Street, 6th Floor, Boston, Massachusetts 02111, (617) 753-8143 (Telephone)

<http://www.state.ma.us/dph/dhcq/nar.htm>

MCRN 2003 Grants Announced

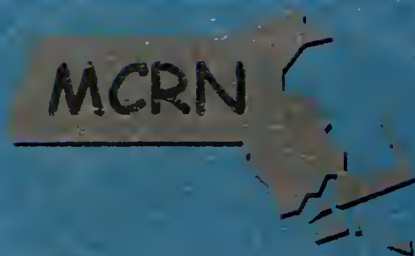
In spring 2002, Perkins-eligible institutions were given the opportunity to apply for a MCRN grant by submitting a Request for Proposal (RFP). The RFP was published on the DOE's website.

The MCRN recently announced that the Board of Education has approved 17 grants for 2003. Each institution chosen had submitted a proposal that uniquely addressed career development and awareness activities for students. Congratulations to the following institutions. Each will receive a grant of \$5,000.

Franklin Public Schools, Greater Pioneer Valley, School to Career, Leominster Public Schools, New Bedford Public Schools, Shawsheen Valley Technical High School, Springfield Public Schools: Putnam VTHS, Taunton Area School to Career, Upper Cape Cod Technical High School, Worcester Public Schools, Gateway Regional School District, Haverhill Public Schools, Minuteman Technical High School, Quinsigamond Community College, Southbridge Public Schools, Springfield Technical Community College, Taunton Public Schools, Westfield Public Schools

The Real Game Series Facilitator Training for Real Game (7th-8th grade) and the Be Real Game (9th-10th) will be offered on Wednesday, November 20, 2002 from 8:30 to 3:15 at the Best Western Hotel, Marlboro, MA. An agenda and response card have been e-mailed to your institution's MCRN contact and guidance offices in Perkins-eligible institutions.

Facilitator's Kits for each participant are being provided through MCRN funds. Each program is limited to 50 participants. Contact mjain@doe.mass.edu to register and to choose one of the two programs. Registration closes on November 1, 2002 so that Facilitator Kits can be ordered to be delivered on time. Don't miss this valuable professional development opportunity!

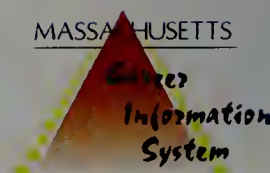


MASSACHUSETTS CAREER RESOURCE NETWORK

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MCRN

Making First Impressions Count

by Debra J. Hunter, Career Specialist at Lenoxmeadow High School
University of Massachusetts
Depository Copy

In order for students to be properly prepared for effective career exploration, they need to be armed with information and confidence to help them venture out into the workplace.

Concentration should be placed on helping students become aware of business etiquette and how to conduct themselves in a professional way. By being aware and organized, students can appear more confident, employable, and prepared.

Students should also be offered the chance to gain experience and discover business expectations. A

workshop can help students be aware of what questions to anticipate, what answers are appropriate, and what questions are not.

Without self-assurance in a situation, we tend to feel inadequate and uneasy. Teaching students about introduction techniques and business protocol will help them make it through the interview or meeting.

Proper attire, punctuality, suitable eye contact, and a good solid handshake need to be stressed. During informal workshops, students can learn about what to wear, how to be seated, and

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Job Prospects Look Good

by Linda Duffy, Parker Middle School

Job Prospects look good for students at the Parker Middle School in Chelmsford, MA.

A comprehensive ten-week career explorations program was developed by Linda Duffy, a Family and Consumer Science teacher, in which eighth graders design and construct CAREER PORTFOLIOS.

Through the portfolio process, students obtain the foundation necessary to find and hold onto a good job, and identify and articulate their own occupational competencies and career goals.

They complete interest inventories, explore a variety of entry-level, skilled and professional jobs, and assess and prioritize job values and considerations.

Students also demonstrate their ability to market their personal and employability skills while participating in a mock interview.

Visit Linda Duffy's webpage at: <http://www.chelmsford.k12.ma.us/parker/coollinks/careerinfo.htm> for many useful links and activities that are included in this program.

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Special points of interest:

- Fifty attend training.
- MCRN Spring Conference.
- Bill and account collector career.
- Free for Massachusetts residents.

Real Game Training Draws A Crowd

Over 50 career development professionals attended a one-day Real Game series training on November 20, 2002. This training was funded through the MCRN.

Two programs in the series were offered: the Real Game for Grades 7 and 8 and the Be Real Game for Grades 9 and 10. Through hands-on group activities, those who attended experienced a taste of what students do in a variety of innovative and enjoyable career based situations.

The Real Game training underscored the importance of planning and goal setting to assist students to attain a future that includes career satisfaction and economic success.

In the Real Game series, students will discover personal skills and talents they may not have recognized. The connections to school, work, and life roles become clearer. Students begin to understand that academics and future success are realized in unique ways, and they learn to respect people in a broad range of occupations.

The Massachusetts Center for Career and Technical Education (MCCTE) located at Minuteman Technical High School has several sets of both the Real Game and the Be Real Game. For more information contact John McDonagh at MCCTE. His e-mail is: jmcdonagh@minuteman.org.

The facilitators for the Real Game training were Donna Trucci and Karen DeCoster. The facilitators for the Be Real Game were Georgia Dumont and Ann Hughes-Thomas. A special thanks goes to Donna and Georgia and the Taunton Area School to Career Program. Their time was donated through their organization.

First Impressions

(Continued from page 1)

what type of interview questions to expect.

It is also helpful for students to be coached on how to successfully answer uncomfortable questions and how to react to an embarrassing situation.

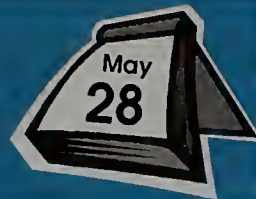
Students should be instructed to answer concisely, have accurate paperwork in hand, and keep fidgeting and "um's" to a minimum.

Being prepared does not guarantee that a student will ace every interview or get every job, but it will help them to be equipped in making the first impression count.

(At East Longmeadow High School Career Center, we offer FIRST IMPRESSION WORKSHOPS as part of our career exploration program. It is mandatory for juniors. This program has benefited students with part-time jobs, college interviews, networking skills, internships and community service learning activities).

Save this date!

MCRN Spring Conference



Relevance, the Missing Link

Promoting Student Success through
Career-Development Education

Wednesday, May 28, 2003

Best Western Royal Plaza Hotel & Conference Center
Marlboro, MA

Sponsored by the MCRN (Massachusetts' Career Resource Network)

For more information contact:

Marnie Jain

Massachusetts Department of Education

Phone: 781-338-3908

E-mail: mjain@doe.mass.edu

Occupational Overview: Bill and Account Collector

What are the duties?

Bill and account collectors locate and seek payment from people, called debtors, who have overdue bills.

Collectors write letters or call debtors to determine why a bill has not been paid.

When contacting debtors, collectors inform them of the overdue amount. If necessary, they go over the terms of the sale,

service, or credit contract with the customers.

When debtors are unemployed or have other debts, collectors may provide credit counseling. In addition, they try to work out payment plans with debtors.

When customers agree to pay, collectors note this in the records. Later, collectors check to ensure that the payments were actually made. When customers do not respond, collectors may turn the account over to a lawyer.

Sometimes collectors have services disconnected or merchandise repossessed if payments are not made.

Collectors often need to locate debtors who moved and did not leave a new address. Collectors

check with the post office, telephone companies, credit bureaus, or former neighbors to obtain a debtor's new address. This process is called skiptracing.

Once they find debtors, collectors update their addresses in the

database or file, and then contact them.

Many collectors handle administrative tasks for their accounts. For example, they

keep records of their contacts with debtors.

Some collectors fill out daily reports of their actions. In some companies, collectors receive the payments and post them to the accounts. Collectors often use computers to keep track of accounts.

What preparation is needed?

Bill and account

collectors need at least a high school education or GED. College course work is not required, but it is helpful for those who want to be managers.

Most employers provide training. This training may last up to two

months and is given in a classroom or on the job. Training may include lectures, videotapes, role-playing, and hands-on experience.

In addition to learning about skiptracing and the firm's billing procedure, new collectors learn communication and negotiating skills. Learning to use the firm's computer and telephone systems is an important part of the training.

Classes in accounting, business math, or business law are recommended. Courses that teach thinking, speech, or writing skills are also suggested.

How much does it pay?

Pay varies with the employer's size, location, and type. The worker's education, experience, and responsibility also affect wages.

In Massachusetts, the average monthly wage for bill and account collectors is \$2,220. Half of the people who work in this occupation earn between \$1,910 and \$2,640 a month.

Bill and account collectors who work full time usually receive benefits. Common benefits are sick leave, paid vacation, and health insurance.

Bill and account collectors advance by working on more difficult cases. Those who have good organizational skills may become supervisors.

Experience in a bank, credit bureau, or credit department would be useful for those who want to be bill and account collectors.

For more information on bill and account collectors, or another career, go to:

<http://masscis.intocareers.org>

Attention All Career Development Professionals . . .

Massachusetts residents can now access the full version of MassCIS for free!

The latest update of the Massachusetts Career Information System (MassCIS) includes several improvements. The most exciting change is that Massachusetts residents can now access all twenty CIS components on the Internet for free (*the desktop version is still available for a fee*). We have also added two new components, the O*NET Interest Profiler and the O*NET Work Importance Locator. These components allow users to identify their strongest work-related interests and values, and matches them with the 480 occupations featured in MassCIS. Other improvements include more detailed listings in Mass Schools, and a new Links component.

Also, our office publishes two publications that might be of interest: the *Parent's Guide to Career Planning for Middle and High School Students* – a resource guide on career exploration activities by grade level, and the *Job Interview Pocket Guide* – a wallet-sized resource for keeping the information you need when you go on an interview.

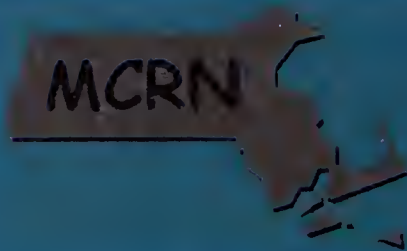
If you would like to receive copies of these publications, are interested in the desktop version of MassCIS, or have any questions, please contact MassCIS at 617-626-5718, or MassCIS@detma.org.

To access MassCIS go to: <http://masscis.intocareers.org>

The first page you see is the log-in page. To log-in:

- 1) In the **Town** drop-down box, please select your city or town.
- 2) In the **ZIP Code** box, please enter the correct five-digit ZIP code for the city or town that you've selected. If you enter a ZIP code that does not correspond to the town you've selected, you will not be able to sign in.
- 3) In the **Type of User** drop-down box, please select the user category that you feel best describes you.
- 4) Click on the sign-in button.

You are now on the MassCIS Home Page. Choose a component and begin to explore!



MASSACHUSETTS CAREER RESOURCE NETWORK

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